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MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

A Lecture Delivered in the Lutheran Church at Newberry, S. C., by Prof. Julius B. Fox, A. M., March 29th, 1889.

[Publication requested by the Editor and others.]

On the night of the 31st of March, 1848, in the village of Hydesville, in the State of New York, Spiritualism in its modern form first came into existence. Here lived a family named Fox—no lineal antecedents of mine as far as I know—consisting of a father, mother and two daughters, Margaretta and Catherine, aged respectively twelve and nine. For some months they had been annoyed by repeated mysterious knockings in the walls and furniture of their cottage home. At last on the night of March 31st, the little girl, Kate or Catherine, happened to notice that the rappings seemed to reply to any words uttered by the members of the family. "Do as I do," she said, snapping her fingers, and instantly the sounds responded. "Count ten," she said, and ten raps were given. "How old is Margaret?" the mother asked, and twelve raps followed. "How old is Kate?" nine raps. Very soon words were spelt out, and questions answered, and meanwhile the rappings went on vigorously.

This was the beginning of Modern Spiritualism. But it was at Rochester, New York, where the two Misses Fox were sent on a visit to their married sister, that the strange phenomena began to attract public attention. Here the rappings followed them, though some were left at home to disturb the mental peace of old Mr. and Mrs. Fox and their near neighbors. They were strongest and most frequent, however, in the presence of Miss Kate Fox, the youngest daughter.

At length on the 14th of November, 1848, a public lecture was delivered on the subject at which specimens of the rappings were given. The newspapers, of course, took up the matter and spread the knowledge of it throughout the country. Persons in all the States began to develop "mediumistic power," as it was called, and by 1850, Spiritualism had become a recognized institution throughout America and began to be heard of, principally in the way of ridicule, in England and on the Continent. Gradually the doctrine attracted more and more attention. The Hon. John W. Edmonds, a Judge of the New York Court of Appeals, and Robert Hare, M. D., Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, both undertook to investigate the matter, and expose its delusions, and both ended by admitting their conviction of the genuineness of the facts. Such men, too, as Horace Greeley and N. P. Talmadge, Governor of Wisconsin, bore testimony to the genuineness of some of the manifestations, as clairvoyance, spirit-writing and drawing, uting complicated knots, lifting of immense weights, and even the assumption of a tangible spirit body.

By 1853 the movement had spread over England. Especially was this true, when Daniel Douglas Home, the greatest perhaps of the early Spiritualists, went over and gave exhibitions in London. From this Spiritualism began to spread like wildfire all over Europe, and there seemed to be a perfect mania over it everywhere, particularly for table-turning. Some of the most eminent scholars turned to the study of the mysterious phenomena—men like Lord Brougham, Sir David Brewster, Prof. DeMorgan, the eminent mathematician, and Faraday, the scientist. In 1869 the London Dialectical Society appointed a large committee to examine into the phenomena, and from the report which was published in 1871, it appears that its members were thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of many of the alleged manifestations, though the question of their spiritual origin was of course left entirely open. Exhibitions of Spiritualism were given before Napoleon III, in Paris, and Alexander II, in St. Petersburg. Greater things were now accomplished—speaking in foreign languages; lighting a phosphorescent light in the dark; producing of drawings, pictures and photographs; and finally, the complete embodiment of a departed spirit, at least so far as to make him recognizable to friends and relatives.

The extent to which Spiritualism has spread, and the present number of Spiritualists are very difficult to determine. Vague calculations have from time to time been attempted. In 1867 one spiritualist estimated the number at 11,000,000; and another has held 3,000,000 to be an extreme estimate. The periodicals devoted to Spiritualism may perhaps be taken to indicate the present state of the movement. There are two weekly newspapers in London, called *Light* and *The Medium and Day-break*, and one of these has advertisements of meetings in 60 different towns, and in 50 different roads. Outside of Great Britain, there are about 100 Spiritualistic Journals; 30 in English, of which 25 are published in America, and 4 in the Australian Colonies; 15 in 20 in French; 6 in German, and 40 in Spanish, which circulate in Spain and South America. Private circles which meet regularly are supposed to be numerous in England; and there are numerous public and semi-public mediums, especially among the miners in the North. There were in 1871, in America, 125 Spiritualist Societies and 207 professional lecturers. The movement, at present, does not seem to be on the increase, and is not so popular, I believe, at least in the United States, as it was ten years ago.

We now ask the question, What is Spiritualism? The term Spiritualism is used by writers on Philosophy to denote the opposite of Materialism, or that there is in man a spirit that rises above matter, which constitutes him a rational free being, endowed with intellect, sensibility and free will. This is orthodox doctrine which all ought to accept. But Modern Spiritualism, which is the subject of this lecture, and in the discussion of which we are now engaged, is in its present development a species of religious belief, that certain strange physical and mental phenomena, which cannot be explained by the known laws of nature, are the result of the direct intervention of incorporeal spirits. In other words, it is the belief that such things as table-rappings, lifting of weights, not in contact with the medium, clairvoyance or knowledge of distant occurrences, luminous clouds, and materialized forms of spirits, which can be felt, embraced and even photographed, are all the direct manifestations and operations of spirits in whose existence men have believed for ages.

In order that this discussion may be as little abstract as possible, and that you may better understand from selected illustrations what Spiritualism is, and in its various forms professes to accomplish, I will now offer a few examples.

Case 1. The first case I shall mention is that of Mary Carrick, an Irish girl, 18 years of age, who came to this country in May, 1867. Immediately upon her arrival she was engaged in a very respectable family in a large New England town; appeared to be in good health, and performed the duties required of her in a satisfactory manner. She was totally unacquainted with the subject of Spiritualism. After about six weeks, the bells communicating with the outside door, and with the various apartments in the house commenced ringing unaccountably. The bells were isolated, but they did not cease ringing.

Some time after this, frequent loud and startling raps on the walls, doors, or windows of the room where Mary worked began to be heard. Sometimes they were heard in her bed room, and upon going there it was ascertained that she was sound asleep.

About three weeks later, a series of still more extraordinary phenomena commenced. Sofas were upset, crockery fell to the floor, tables lifted and moved about the room, cooking utensils were hurled from one point to another. At length a journal of observation was kept, and such entries as these were made:

August 5th. As Mary was washing, a low table, laden with two large tubs of water, was suddenly moved. August 6th. As Mary was ironing, flat-iron was thrown to the floor. The table was lifted in this way at moments when she was several feet from it. A heavy soap-stone slab, weighing forty pounds, was repeatedly lifted and dropped.

And thus the strange phenomena continued to be witnessed from day to day by the whole family, until the girl was attacked with hysteria and insanity, and she was sent to the asylum.

No rappings or other phenomena occurred during her absence. After two weeks she was pronounced able to resume her work, and she returned in a happy frame of mind. The phenomena did not occur again until two months; the girl grew very fleshy, and was learning to read and write with considerable rapidity. Her hysterical attacks, however, recurred, and she was again sent to the asylum, where she was employed as a housemaid.

It is worth noting, in passing, that this girl was subject to fits of epilepsy, and complained of pains and soreness at the base of the brain, or in the medulla oblongata.

Case 2. The next case is that of Mollie Fancher, of Brooklyn, N. Y. I do not know that Miss Fancher professes to be a spiritualist, but her case is analogous. I am satisfied that there can be no possible doubt in regard to this case. She has been visited again and again by learned physicians, and ministers, who have told the strange story of her life repeatedly. What I shall say of her is taken from a long account given in a religious paper called *The Lutheran*, published in Philadelphia, and I believe was also published in the Philadelphia Times. It is written by Rev. H. W. Myers, of Reading, Pa., a Lutheran minister, and a regular correspondent of *The Lutheran*. He has visited Miss Fancher twice recently. The story of her life is briefly this: While coming from school, when a child, she was thrown from a street car, and sustained internal injuries. Eighteen or twenty years have elapsed, and she has passed through many strange and mysterious changes. She has a beautiful form, and lies constantly with one arm behind her head. She receives little nourishment, and the manner in which she has continued to live so long is truly marvelous. She is sometimes in a trance for weeks and even months. She is able to read letters without being opened, and can tell the hour when a screen is interposed between her and the clock. On one occasion she remarked that her uncle, who had been a long time absent, was standing at the door, and though no one had received any notice of his coming, he was really there. She described to the physician the course by which he came in the dark, and it was correctly given. She says that she sees through the top of her head. This is one of the most remarkable cases ever known, and the facts I have given are undoubtedly true, besides others in regard to her, I have not time to mention.

Case 3. Another remarkable case taken from a volume called "Ten Years with Spiritual Mediums," is that of Pinetti, a famous conjurer, who appeared at St. Petersburg, early in the present century. I do not vouch for the authenticity of this case, though it is said to be well attested. I merely mention it to show the extent to which claims of conjuring, Spiritualism, etc., can be carried. Pinetti, anyway, was announced for a *seance* before the Czar Alexander. "The hour set was seven o'clock. Five minutes after seven, and no Pinetti. A quarter past—no Pinetti. Half-past seven and no Pinetti. Messengers went and returned unsuccessful. The Czar waxed wrathful, but no Pinetti. At last at the clock in the palace were about to strike eight, the door opened, and Pinetti walked in with the serenity of a punctual conjurer. The Emperor was just about to indulge in a burst of wrath, when Pinetti took the initiative with the question, "Did not your majesty command my presence at exactly seven o'clock?" "Just so," responded the exasperated Czar.

"Well, then," responded the conjurer, quietly, "let your majesty deign to consult your dial, and you will see that I am exact, and that it is just seven o'clock."

The Czar consulted his dial and was amazed. The hands marked exactly seven. All the courtiers did so in their turn, and it was seven. All the clocks in the palace were at seven.

"Your majesty will pardon me," said Pinetti, "I was desirous of making an impression. If you will consult again, you will find the hands marking the real hour." And every dial in the palace, from that in the Czar's pocket and those in the pockets of the assembled courtiers, to the great clocks with silver faces, indicated a few minutes past eight. As he was about leaving, having performed other equally astonishing feats, the emperor reminded Pinetti that he had boasted that he could penetrate anywhere.

"So I can, your majesty," replied Pinetti.

"Very well," said the Czar, "at twelve o'clock to-morrow I shall have ready in my closet one thousand rubles; come and get them; but I forewarn you that the doors shall be closed and carefully guarded."

"To-morrow at noon, I shall have the honor of presenting myself before your majesty," said Pinetti, and withdrew.

The gentlemen present accompanied Pinetti to his lodgings, and caused the house to be surrounded by a cordon of the police the moment he entered. The palace of the Czar was also instantly closed, and no one permitted to enter without the Czar's command. High dignitaries held every avenue to the emperor, and all the palace keys were carried up into the imperial cabinet and locked up. A few minutes before twelve a representative from the police guard announced by message that Pinetti had not left home. But as twelve o'clock sounded, and while the last stroke reverberated, the door between the bed-room of the Czar and his cabinet opened, and Pinetti appeared.

He concluded his feats by leaving St. Petersburg, which then had fifteen gates, at all the gates at ten o'clock, exactly. That he did so was declared by hosts of spectators who knew him by sight, and was attested by the written declarations of the officers placed at the gates to inspect the passports of travellers. The inscription of his passports was inscribed in the fifteen registers. I wish it distinctly understood that I do not place any seal of truthfulness upon this case, and confess myself too incredulous to accept its authority.

Cases of character similar to these might be indefinitely multiplied, but the short time allotted to this lecture forbids my entering further into details.

It would no doubt be quite thrilling to us all to witness some of the pretended manifestations of spiritualism; for example, the formation of luminous clouds in the presence of a medium; to listen to the music of the piano played by unseen hands; or behold a hand which can be touched and embraced grow out of nothing but the atmosphere; a hand that receives from yours a pencil to write a message; or behold a pencil itself rise and write a line like this, "I have done this, that all present may know that I am a spirit;" or behold a phantom of entire form, resembling the spirit of a departed friend, floating around the room, playing an instrument, then gradually wasting into a nebula, and then into nothingness. All this, says a writer, was witnessed by himself on different occasions in New York.

And now, if these facts are true what is their cause? How are such really wonderful phenomena accomplished? Are they wrought by the agency of incorporeal spirits as spiritualists assert, or can they be explained satisfactorily on scientific and physiological principles?

These are questions which we now propose to consider as briefly as possible. One of the theories advanced to account for the phenomena of Spiritualism is *fraud* on the part of mediums. This is no doubt true in many instances. "Katie King turned out a fraud. Mrs. Dis DeBars confessed in the New York Courts the other week herself a fraud. The Davenport and Maxwells were all exposed. Kellar and Hermann can perform better tricks than any medium." But not every medium is a fraud. Many of them are honest in their feats. But after all that does not prevent them from being self-deceived.

Another theory is *conjuring*. This is proposed by the writer of the article on Spiritualism in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, who grounds his arguments principally upon the reasons that mediums as a rule have no settled programme, and thus avail themselves of accidental circumstances for trickery; and that many of their arts are analogous to those of conjurers. This objection evidently has weight, but I do not see how it is to account for all the facts of Spiritualism.

Another theory is that of a hypothetical nerve-atmosphere, which surrounds every person, and particularly a medium; and is advanced by Fairfield, author of a book entitled, "Ten Years with Spiritual Mediums." It is well-sustained, but the present state of science does not justify us in adopting such an hypothesis. The same may be said of the new force, called *psychic force*, proposed by Prof. Crookes, an eminent chemist in England, who was a spiritualist, and who has given Spiritualism a more scientific character than any other man.

True light began to dawn upon the subject, when Faraday proposed the theory of unconscious muscular action; and when we combine this with the theory of unconscious cerebration proposed and so ably defended by Dr. Carpenter in his standard work on Physiology, I think we will have almost a sufficient cause for all the wonders of Spiritualism. If these theories are true, we need not go beyond the mediums themselves to account for what is claimed to be the intervention of spirits.

Simplified, the theory offered by Dr. Carpenter is this: The mind acts when we are not conscious of its action. I read a book, plainly written; the ideas, perceptions, the thoughts lucidly expressed. As I read the sentences, I am not conscious of the words and letters in the sentence. Again: I forget a name; a story; a line of poetry. I endeavor to recall it; concentrate all my mental energies upon it; but in vain, it is gone. I then think of something else; something entirely different. But at all once, when I return to the forgotten fact; the name, story or line of poetry, presents itself. Now, evidently, my mind was working while I was thinking of that other matter; working when I was not conscious of the work; and this unconscious cerebration will account for nearly all the pretended miracles of Spiritualism. Take an example. In the Rev. R. W. Dildin's Lecture on Table-turning, he tells us of a gentleman who believed in the spiritual agency of his table, and who believed himself to be in communication with Edward Young, the poet. He desired the spirit to prove his identity by citing a line of his poetry, and the table rapped out,

"Man was not made to question but adore."

Being asked whether the line was in the "Night Thoughts," the spirit replied (through the table) "No."

"Where is it, then?" The reply was "Job."

Not being familiar with Young's poems he bought a copy the next day, and at the end of the Night Thoughts, he found a paraphrase on Job, the last line of which is that just cited. Of course the man was very much astonished; but it turned out that he had the book all the time in his house, had read it before; and now his own mind, under the excitement of the moment, was only unconsciously reproducing what was already in it. We may therefore safely assert that in all the messages of Spiritualism, whether through the table, or through pencils supposed to be held in spirit hands, there is nothing but the reproduction of something already in the mind of the medium, or in that of those who think they witness it.

Dr. Carpenter also added to this theory of unconscious cerebration, that of *expectant attention*. A company surround a table with a medium. They are all excited; place their hands upon it; with minds fully fixed upon the idea that the table is going to move. This dominant idea overthrows all will power, and there is produced an unconscious contraction of the muscles, and these unconscious movements are communicated to the table. A little jar is felt. The excitement increases. Muscular action increases. The table receives more jars, and finally begins to rap furiously or spin around rapidly, all because nervous, trembling hands are pushing it with all their might. So also, the theory of expectant attention can account for those higher wonders of Spiritualism, namely the "Materialization" of spirit forms. A company is assembled in a private parlor, let us suppose, with a Medium present who has considerable reputation. All believe in Spiritualism; they have the utmost faith in the power of the Medium, and have no other thought than that the pretended phenomena will appear. They direct their eyes to a definite point in the room. Their bodies are agitated with nervousness; their imaginations highly wrought; their eyes are beclouded with moisture; and under such circumstances it is not difficult to believe that you can see anything. The familiar form of your beloved dead is perhaps vividly revived in your memory, and under the great tension of nervous excitement you externalize in space what only exists in your mind. You cannot at any time lift your eyes to the highest possible angle, retain them in that position some length of time, without having vague and indefinite forms to pass before you; all caused by the unnatural strain upon a system of nerves that connect the eye with the brain.

We therefore conclude that the wonders of Spiritualism are purely nervous phenomena. It is said that Mediums invariably receive a nervous shock before exercising their peculiar powers, their eyes sunk, and their faces assume a pallor as of death. They are nearly all of defective physical organization; and frequent performances soon exhaust the nervous energies of the operator. Some of them have dropped dead immediately after their most celebrated feats. If you contemplate becoming a medium, provided you have little enough nerve energy to be one, you had better take first a life-insurance policy. Another remarkable fact is that mediums are either subjects of epilepsy, themselves, or epilepsy is in their families. It is also interesting to know that the raps caused by the Fox sisters, was discovered by physicians to be due to the rapid dislocations and restorations of the knee joint and other joints. It only remains to say, therefore, that there is not a single phenomenon of Spiritualism that cannot be accounted for on physiological and psychological principles. And the day is not distant, when like the ancient oracles of Delphos, the ecstatic revelations of Catholic and Protestant Visionaries, the dancing mind of the middle ages; and a host of other superstitions and epidemic delusions, Spiritualism will enjoy an undisturbed oblivion.

Another Letter From Mexico.

NEW LERADO, MEXICO, March 13, 1889.

Well, I like Mexico better every day. While I feel complimented on my promotion, I like running better. I told the master mechanic that I preferred the road to the round-house, but he says I am giving better satisfaction than any one they have ever had, and was doing work with less expense, and he insisted on my keeping the job.

Labor is, or some of it, very unsatisfactory here. I have Americans, Mexicans and negroes, and the latter is very poor labor in a machine shop. To their credit, I must say they are tenfold better than the Mexican. A few days ago I had orders to fit an engine up at one to go out. I told them to hurry up. This answer was "we are in no hurry," and I had to discharge three at one time.

I think I will come home on a business trip in May, but can't positively say yet.

The weather is very changeable here now. It is now 8 a. m., and it is 20 degrees colder than it was at 4 a. m., and possibly will be very hot this evening. I can now begin to feel the change.

I would like to tell you of some of the cities I have been in since I have been here, but I am a poor writer and it would require a good one to describe them. Among many smaller towns, I have been in Monterey, and been all over it. It is a beautiful place, especially on principal plaza. At night when lighted up by electric lights, it is a grand sight. Nearly all the houses are built of stone, brick or clay. There are but few frame houses, as timber is very scarce in this country. Monterey has a population of about 42,000, and of that number about one hundred are Americans.

I have also been in Saltillo, a city of about 35,000 inhabitants. I cannot say much of this place as it is located about one mile from the depot, but from what I have seen of it, it reminds me of Chattanooga, Tenn., being almost entirely surrounded by mountains or very high peaks.

San Luis is another beautiful city of about 65,000 inhabitants, and is also in and among the mountains. I did not get over it enough to give a description of it, but saw it was beautifully located and found a good many Americans in it.

But the largest is the City of Mexico. Here is a place to feast the eyes upon. I can't attempt a description of what it is, and what I saw there. It certainly has the appearance of an ancient city, but has some magnificent modern buildings. Its population is about 200,000. Two thirds Spaniards and the other third are people of all nations and from all parts of the world.

I have been in many other small cities and towns and if I was able to write a description of them, I would not know where to begin, but when I get home I can tell you a little about some of them, as I think I am a better talker than I was when I left South Carolina. I can begin to talk Spanish pretty well.

Well, here's my mail, and among it I find *The Herald and News*. If I could only see how eagerly I ponder over its columns! All is news to me, and I can't write any more till I read it.

D. C. DICKERT.

Redly the firelight shines through the room, Chasing away all the shadow and gloom; Light-hearted children are prating in glee; Father is happy as can be, For the wife and mother who suffered so long, Is getting her health back and soon will be strong.

And who is so happy as she is to-night, As she thinks of the shadow that's taken its flight—

The shadow of disease that darkens so many homes, and makes the life of wife and mother one of terrible suffering. How pleased we are to know that at last a remedy has been found for all those delicate derangements and weaknesses peculiar to women. It comes to cheerless homes with "glad tidings of great joy." Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription has done for women what no other remedy has done, or can do, and it is not to be wondered at that women who have been cured by it are so enthusiastic in its praise. It is the only medicine for women sold by druggists, under a positive guarantee from the manufacturers of satisfaction, or money returned.

Catarrh, when chronic, becomes very offensive. It is impossible to be otherwise healthy, and, at the same time, afflicted with catarrh. This disagreeable disease, in its most obstinate and dangerous forms, can be cured by the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

Some Notes of Brother Editors of Long Ago.

[Abbeyville Press and Banner.]

This is the thirtieth anniversary of the present editor's connection with the Press and Banner. On the first day of April, 1859, the editor of this paper bought an interest in the Independent Press—the consolidation of that paper with the Abbeyville Banner making the present Abbeyville Press and Banner.

Since April, 1859, many changes have taken place among the editors of the newspapers in this State—nearly all of whom have passed away, and new men have taken their places.

As far as we can remember just now only three are in the places which they then held, and three others who conducted papers then, have given up the papers which they then controlled, to take charge of other papers in the State.

In the first class, we would mention: Mr. L. M. Grist, of the Yorkville Enquirer, who, we believe, has been in the same office longer than any other man in the State, has been in connection with the same paper.

Col. R. A. Thompson, of the Keowee Courier, entered that office sometime about 1852 or 1853.

Mr. John C. Bailey, of the Greenville Enterprise and Mountaineer, in partnership with W. P. Price, commenced the publication of the Southern Enterprise a year or two after Colonel Thompson went into the Keowee Courier.

These three, we believe, are all the editors who stand to-day where they stood in 1859.

Three others who were editors in 1859 are still editors, but of different papers:

Mr. R. M. Stokes then of the Laurensville Herald, is now of the Union Times.

Colonel James A. Hoyt, now of the Baptist Courier, then owned and edited a newspaper in the city of Anderson. Colonel Thomas B. Crews in 1859 was the junior partner of Davis & Crews in the ownership of the Abbeyville Banner. He now edits the Laurensville Herald.

At present we do not recall the name of any other editor in 1859, who is alive to-day, except Mr. Thomas F. Greener, recently owner of the Newberry Herald. Because of age and infirmity, he retired from business several years ago.

The changes in the citizenship of Abbeyville village have been no less marked, than the changes among the editors in the State. Of the business men of 1859, scarcely half dozen survive, and, excepting Messrs. W. A. Lee and W. H. Parker, attorneys at law, and Capt. John G. Edwards, merchant, we believe no man is still in the same business which he then conducted.

With a few exceptions, here and there, the subscription list of the paper is a new one. While every country editor must feel more or less interest in the individual subscribers to his paper, who are of course to some extent, his neighbors and friends, the country editor must regard with peculiar feelings those old friends who have stood by him through all the varying scenes of thirty years, and we would not be ourselves, if we did not feel a lasting friendship for all the brethren with whom we were in any way associated in early life. While exciting causes at times may disturb the needle in the compass, and while seeming differences would alienate the heart, yet for all that the needle returns to its proper position, and the affections of early life as surely resume their normal condition.

Each and every surviving editor in 1859, whose name we have mentioned, is a practical printer, and has made his impression on the community in which he has lived. Their upright characters and lives are known of all men. Some of them have held high offices of honor and trust, and each and all did a noble part in the scenes of war, while some bore off disabling wounds. With a record inferior to none in their respective communities, and with great influence for good, they possess the love and respect of their fellow-citizen, while their different newspapers, will perhaps, average as high as any same number of newspapers to be found anywhere in the South.

R. A. Thompson, L. M. Grist, John C. Bailey, Thomas B. Crews, James A. Hoyt, R. M. Stokes, Thos. F. Greener—nature's noblemen and worthy citizens. Their honorable careers and their places in the affections of the people are a living testimonial of the worth and the superior manhood that may be developed in the head and heart of printer boys, and their success in life should be an incentive to higher aspirations and greater exertions on the part of those who now stand at the case and toil early and late, it may be, at exceedingly low wages, as did some of these brethren in the years whose records are complete.

If you have a cold, cough, bronchitis, or any form of throat or lung disease, do not neglect it. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, if promptly taken, will speedily relieve and cure all ailments of this character.

Catarrh, when chronic, becomes very offensive. It is impossible to be otherwise healthy, and, at the same time, afflicted with catarrh. This disagreeable disease, in its most obstinate and dangerous forms, can be cured by the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

A WAVE OF FIRE.

Villages and Towns Leveled to the Ground, Farm Houses, Barns and Live Stock Consumed—Losses Aggregating Millions of Dollars.

MINNEAPOLIS, April 4.—During the last two days South Dakota and Minnesota have been swept by a series of wind storms which have caused hundreds of thousands of dollars damage to property, and several lives have been lost. The storm started Monday night and swept over a large area South of the Northern Pacific Railroad in Dakota, and extending into the Southern tiers of Counties in this State.

The greatest damage has not been caused by wind alone, but in many places the fires, fanned into fury by the storms, have wiped out of existence several small villages and hundreds of farmers' houses.

The towns almost completely destroyed are Violin, Olivet, Pukwana, Lesterville and Mount Vernon, and three or four villages were badly damaged. At Violin every house in the place except three were demolished and 100 people are without homes. Lesterville is flattened to the ground and twenty families are without a roof.

A terrible gale of wind struck Mount Vernon and fire started from a small house that was blown over early last night. No human power could stop the flames, and in an hour the best portion of the place was one great raging fire. Nearly 200 families are homeless and the loss will foot up \$200,000.

It is reported that several persons lost their lives in this fire, but no confirmation has yet been received. Four large elevators and the Milwaukee depot were destroyed.

Near Clunt, one man lost 500 head of sheep which were caught in the prairie fire. Several head of horses were saved by swimming the river. In many places the crops were covered by loose sand and dust and will have to be replanted.

Travel was suspended on some lines of road so great was the force of the wind. Clouds of dust prevented the engineers from seeing the track. A report from Gary says the sun was almost totally obscured, and the superstitious thought the end of the world had come. Farm houses and barns were swept away and horses and cattle were burned to death by scores.

Near Milbank fifty head of live stock are reported lost, and fire has swept over twenty miles of country, causing immense losses.

The storm has abated somewhat, but the wind is yet high enough to keep the fire burning fiercely, and further heavy losses are almost certain. The damages in Minnesota is much less than in Dakota, as the force of the storm was pretty well spent before it reached the boundary.

A dispatch from Yankton, Dakota, says: The records of the Signal Office show that during the prevalence of the fires in this region the humidity was but seven per cent.—a condition of dryness, Sergeant Oswald says, never before attained in this region. The maximum humidity is 100; the mean annual humidity here is 70. This shows that the atmosphere was almost devoid of moisture. The velocity of the wind was forty-six miles an hour. The losses in South Dakota will foot up \$2,000,000, at low calculation.

St. PAUL, April 4.—A Lake Benton, Minn., special says: The most devastating prairie fire ever known raged over the prairies West and North of Lake Benton Tuesday. The wind was a hurricane for nearly twenty-four hours, and swept the fire along with resistless force, passing the widest fire breaks as nothing and leaping plowed fields with a bound, it ticked up houses, barns, stock and in some places human lives. The greatest destruction of property and loss of life is in Dakota. Ree Heights, a town West on the Northwestern road, is almost destroyed. Dempster, a station of the Watertown branch, is reported destroyed. Spaulding's Ranch, near there, is also reported consumed. Crossing into Lincoln County, over a tract of land comparatively little settled and covered with a heavy growth of grass, it swept on with renewed velocity. It is reported that Henry Kourth, Mr. Berg, G. M. Moon and others near here lost nearly all their buildings with contents.

A Jackson, Minn., special says: The prairie fires prove more general than was at first believed. Additional losses are reported from all directions, and messengers bring news of stubborn fights to save endangered property. Fires were raging in every direction, and each seemed to pursue a distinct course of its own. The fire which would have swept this village from the face of the earth has been traced to its origin. The search culminated in the arrest of James Traynick. When arraigned he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to pay \$25 and costs, or in default thereof thirty days in jail. Much dissatisfaction is expressed about this sentence. Public opinion is that justice has been too highly tempered with mercy.

The Miller, Dakota, correspondent of the Pioneer Press telegraphs: The prairie fires Tuesday night destroyed about forty houses, many barns, a large number of horses and cattle, and left about forty animals destitute in the South part of this County. A terrible gale of wind added to the terrors of the situation. The loss is estimated at \$50,000. The County Commissioners are in session and will see that no one suffers for the necessities of life.

From Huron, Dakota, comes the following: No prairie fire in the history

of this part of Dakota equals that of Tuesday. In this County the losses are much less than in the Counties West. Half a dozen houses were burned and many settlers lost their barns, some stock and a large quantity of hay and grain. The wind was from fifty to sixty miles an hour and sent the burning embers over the ploughed ground and fire-breaks several rods wide, setting fire to everything in their course. The fire came up so rapidly that settlers had only time to save themselves, leaving their property to the mercy of the flames. In Sully and Hughes Counties \$200,000 worth of property has been destroyed. Near Highmore Miss Sweeney was burned to death, and near St. Lawrence Mr. Babcock perished in the flames.

A LIBEL SUIT.

To be Brought Against the Charleston News and Courier by H. A. Lynch, Esq.

[Register 4th.]

In the Charleston News and Courier of yesterday appeared an editorial, under the caption, "Mr. Blaine's New Party," in which reference was made to Mr. R. A. Lynch of this city, who has recently come into unexpected prominence as a candidate for appointment as United States District Attorney.

Mr. Lynch announced last night that he should make certain portions of the editorial referred to the basis for a libel suit against the News and Courier for \$25,000 damages.

The suit is to be brought in the Circuit Court of Charleston County, but Mr. Lynch, at last accounts, had not secured counsel, but intimated an intention of securing as his legal representative some member of the Charleston bar.

The paragraph in the editorial to which Mr. Lynch especially takes exception and upon which he will chiefly base his suit for libel is that containing the expression of belief that in the course of his professional life he had never pleaded a case in court.

THE WOMEN WIN IN KANSAS.

Two Towns Elect Female Governors—Democratic Victory in Leavenworth.

OSKALOOSA, KANSAS, April 3.—The Oskaloosa idea is still extant. After a vigorous fight the female candidates for city offices won the day by sweeping majorities. At Cottonwood Falls, Kansas, the ladies were also triumphant, Mrs. Minnie Morgan being elected Mayor with all the members of the Council of her sex.

LEAVENWORTH, KAN.—The contest for the mayoralty lay between D. R. Anthony, Republican, and L. M. Hacker, Democrat. Susan B. Anthony, sister of the Republican candidate, worked heroically for him but Hacker was elected by about 250 majority. Nearly 4,000 women voted during the day, most of them casting their ballots for Hacker. A man was stabbed at one of the precincts and a woman at another became involved in a wordy war.

Man wants but little here below, But wants that little strong. This is especially true of a purge. The average man or woman does not precisely hanker for it, as